
A

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Lord-Mayor,

On *Sunday, October 28. 1711.*

GIBSON

Heathcote, *Mayor.*

*Cur. Special. tent. in Festo
Sanctorum Simonis &
Judaë, scil. Die Dominico
xxviij^o die Octobris,
1711. Annoq; RR^{na}
Annæ, Magnæ Britan-
niæ, &c. Decimo.*



IT is Ordered, That the
Thanks of this Court be gi-
ven to Mr. *Chambre*, for his
Sermon this Day Preach'd at the
Guild-Hall Chapel, before the
Lord Mayor and Aldermen of
this City; And that he be De-
sir'd to Print the same.

GIBSON.

23 1098
The Duty and Necessity of a Christian
Conversation.

A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H ' D

Before the RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD-MAYOR,
AND
Court of Aldermen,
A T

Guild-Hall Chapel,

On Sunday, October 28. 1711.

Being the Feast of St. Simon and Jude.

By RICHARD CHAMBRE, M. A.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN WYAT, at the Rose in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1711.

Price 4d.



To the Right Honourable
Sir Robert Beechcroft K^t,
LORD-MAYOR
OF THE
City of LONDON;
AND

To the Honourable
Sir Gilbert Heathcote K^t,
Late **LORD-MAYOR**,
And the Rest of the

Court of ALDERMEN;

This plain **DISCOURSE**, pub-
lish'd in Obedience to their
Command, is humbly Dedi-
cated by

Their most Obedient Servant,

RICHARD CHAMBRE.



PHIL. i. 27. former part.

*Only let your Conversation be as it becometh
the Gospel of Christ.*

FOR the better understanding the Design and Connexion of the Words, it may not be improper to observe, that St. Paul, when he wrote this Epistle, was a *Prisoner at Rome* for the Faith of Christ, and does endeavour in this Chapter to comfort the Disconsolate *Philippians*, under their Sorrow and Concern for his Afflictions; and having made use of several Arguments for this Purpose (as, the *farther Manifestation of the Gospel occasion'd by his Bonds*; the Effect which his exemplary *Fortitude and Constancy* had upon others, to *animate and excite them to preach the Gospel boldly, without Fear*; the Benefit and Advantage he was likely to receive himself from those Trials and Afflictions, no less than *Eternal Salvation*, and possibly a greater degree of *Glory and Happiness in Heaven*; the firm Perswasion he had, that his Life should yet be spar'd, and himself be restor'd to them again, for the *Establishment of their Faith, and Confirmation of their Joy, &c.*) He concludes, that since they had no true Reason upon any Account, to be concern'd and disturb'd at his Sufferings, God in his all-wise Providence, so disposing them for his own particular private Advantage, and for the Benefit of the Christian Church; instead of being so
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careful and solicitous about him, or uneasie at his Confinement, they should be solicitous for themselves, and make this their Chief, and in a manner their only Care and Concern, that *their Conversation might be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ*: They should not suffer their great Care for him, to make them thoughtless of themselves, and their Duty; but should always have a principal Regard to what they were more especially oblig'd to as *Christians, viz.* so to live and demean themselves, in so harmless and becoming a manner, as to bring Credit and Reputation to *Christianity*, and advance the Honour and Interest of that Religion they had embrac'd.

The Words are a brief Epitome of a *Christian's* Duty; or the Sum and Substance of *Practical Christianity*, or of what is requir'd of them, who profess themselves the Disciples and Followers of *Christ Jesus*, and to embrace the Doctrine of the *Gospel, viz.* That they *walk worthy and becoming of it*. In speaking to which important Subject, I shall endeavour in my following Discourse,

- I. To open to you the Meaning of the Phrase, and shew you what is meant by *letting our Conversation be becoming the Gospel*.
- II. Propose some Motives to your Consideration, to engage you to the Duty.

I. I shall endeavour to open to you the Meaning of the Phrase, and shew you what is imply'd in it. And in order to this you may please to observe, that the original Word, *τροπικῶς*, which

which our Translators have render'd, *let your Conversation be*, does properly relate to a City, and the Manners and Conversation of them that are free of it: Under which Notion of a City, we find the State of the *Christian Church* sometimes represented in Scripture; as particularly, *Rev. 11. 2.* where it is said, That *the Gentiles*, *i. e.* such as either had not embrac'd Christianity, or else were basely revolted from the Truth and Purity of it, *should tread the holy City under foot*; that is plainly, the *Church of Christ*: And *Chap. 21. 10.* the *Church* is not only call'd *the great City*, but we meet with a particular Description of it under this Notion: And agreeably to this, the *Ephesians* upon their embracing *Christianity*, are said to be *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints*, *Eph. 2. 19.* Members of the same City, *viz. the Household, or Church of God*, as the next Words explain it. And as every City, or incorporated Society, has certain Laws, which oblige every particular Member of it: So the *Gospel* is but a System or Summary of those Rules and Precepts, which every *Christian*, as a Member of the *Church of Christ*, does by his very Profession oblige himself to observe and keep: And to *let our Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel*, does in the general imply no more than this, That we should take care to conform our selves to those Rules of the *Christian Church*, by believing and acting as the *Gospel* does direct and oblige us to do.

But to be more particular; As the *Gospel* or *Christian Religion* is compounded of Doctrines and Precepts, *i. e.* of such things as are to be believ'd

and practis'd by us, and of Motives and Encouragements to Obedience; the walking, or *having our Conversation becoming it*, does imply these Three Things.

1. The maintaining and defending the Truths it delivers to us.

2. The acting agreeably to its Rules and Precepts.

3. The living and behaving our selves as those, who look for great and glorious Rewards in another World.

(1.) It implies the maintaining and defending the Truths and Doctrines of *Christianity*; the not suffering our Religion to be run down, but boldly standing up in the Defence of it, against all Opposition whatsoever; the being zealous in the Cause of the *Gospel*, and constant and courageous in the Profession of it.

Christianity has had its Enemies from the beginning, and met with very great Opposition from its first Plantation: The Devil through all Ages of the *Christian Church*, has been constantly endeavouring to undermine it, and had his Agents busily employ'd to oppose and overthrow it; the *Jews* were strangely inveterate against it, and the *Pagan World* persecuted it with the greatest Violence and Cruelty; Pride and Prejudice mightily egg'd Men on to destroy it, and there seem'd a general Combination of Mankind against that Religion, which would impose Doctrines upon them contrary, not only to their antient receiv'd Principles and Notions, but, as they

they thought, to their very Sense and Reason too. And though, in spite of all the malicious Attempts of its Enemies to the contrary, *Christianity* did afterwards get such footing in the World, that there was scarce any Part of it which had not embrac'd it; yet it is too sadly visible, what a Havock its great Adversary has since made in the Church of *Christ*: So that even at this Day, besides the scatter'd Remains of its ancient Enemies the *Jews*, the much greater part of the World are divided into *Pagans* and *Mahometans*, and become again fierce Opposers of the Gospel; And what is still more to be lamented, even in that small part of the World which is *Christian*, we shall meet with but too many that are *Enemies to the Cross of Christ*, and find the *Gospel* very strongly batter'd and assaulted, on one side by Heresy, Superstition, and Idolatry; and on the other, by the loose Principles of Atheists and Deists, or the presumptuous Impudence of prophane Scoffers and Buffoons; insomuch that it is almost a Rarity to be in the Company of those who pretend to any degree of Wit, and not hear the sacred Truths of our Religion, not only call'd in Question, but even ridicul'd and laugh'd at.

And as the *Gospel* is thus on all sides expos'd to the Insults of its Enemies, He that would walk, or *have his Conversation becoming it*, must be ready upon all Occasions to appear in its Defence, must neither be afraid or asham'd to make a Confession of his Faith, or suffer for the Truth, if he should be call'd to it. Thus did the Martyrs and Confessors of old advance their

Profession, whose Death and Sufferings reflected no small Honour and Reputation upon *Christianity*, and were very instrumental to the Growth and Progress of the *Gospel*; who took *joyfully the spoiling of their Goods*, and boldly confess'd the Name of *Christ*, and maintain'd his Doctrine, tho' they were sure the cruellest Deaths, and most exquisite Tortures were to be the certain Consequence of it. Indeed, in Defence of a false Religion, Men sometimes sacrifice their Lives and Fortunes, but never in such Numbers, as we read of the Primitive *Christians* under the *Heathenish* Persecutions; and it was a great Argument of the Goodness of their Cause, that so many dar'd to venture their Lives for it, and all the most tempting Baits in the World could not seduce them, nor the most valuable Considerations imaginable once influence, or move them from it.

What Times we are reserv'd for we know not, or how our Faith and Constancy may be assaulted: It is not many Ages ago, since even in our own Nation the Devil stirr'd up a Persecution against the sincere Professors of the *Gospel*, and many underwent the fiery Tryal, and seal'd the Truth with their Blood; and it is very Notorious what Cruelties and Barbarities have been exercis'd upon our Protestant Brethren Abroad, thro' the Malice and Tyranny of Popish Oppressors: And should this ever come to be our own Case, and we should at any Time, or in any Place be call'd upon to confess the Faith of *Christ*, or to suffer for it, we cannot act more becoming the *Gospel*, than by hazarding our All
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for its Sake, and expressing our high Esteem and Value for it, by declining no Danger upon its Account: This would be an Encouragement to others to embrace that Religion they see us so constant in the Profession of, and tend very much to the Credit and Propagation of it.

And since the Age we live in, does abound also with Enemies to Christianity of another Nature, who don't attempt its Overthrow, by open Force and Violence; but seek to ruin it by more secret Methods, by questioning its Principles, by deriding its Truths, and by endeavouring by Scoff and Ridicule to bring it into Contempt; we should be always ready to oppose such Persons and their Designs, and not tamely suffer our Religion to be run down, or our selves banter'd out of it; but be as zealous in maintaining and defending it, as they are industrious and vehement to overthrow it; that so they may be ashamed who trouble us, when they see our Constancy in the Faith, and the solid Grounds and unanswerable Reasons upon which our Faith is built. In this Case a courageous resolute Temper is truly becoming a *Christian*; and to be purely Passive in the Matter, or Silent when we hear the *Gospel* abus'd and run down, is basely to betray it; as tho' we had nothing to say for it, or it were a Religion not to be defended: And upon this Account, he that has once embrac'd it, and will not afterwards stand by it and maintain it, does it a much greater Dishonour, than he that actually declines the Profession of it. But farther,

(2.) To

(2.) To let our Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel, is to walk agreeably to its Rules and Precepts, and live up to the Purity and Holiness it enjoins us ; to be diligent in the Practice of all Christian Graces and Vertues, and to avoid every thing that is contrary to our Holy Religion ; to exercise our selves always to keep a good Conscience void of Offence, both towards God, and towards Man, and by holy and blameless Lives, to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

He that would walk worthy of the Gospel, must not pretend to live at random, or do what he pleases ; he must not be guided by his Lusts, or govern'd by his Passions ; but must make the Word of God the Rule of his Actions, and model and regulate his Conversation by it : To act otherwise, to indulge a loose or sinful Course of Life, and run counter to the Precepts of Religion ; is to act unbecoming the Gospel, to disgrace his Profession, and bring a Scandal upon Christianity. And therefore the Apostle does with very good Reason look upon those as Enemies to the Cross of Christ, who making an outward Profession of Christianity, were not careful to conform their Lives to the Purity of its Laws, Phil. 3. 18. because such by their unchristian Practices, did expose it to the Contempt of its Adversaries, and give them occasion to blaspheme and speak reproachfully of it.

It is not the bare entring our selves into the Number of Christians, that makes us walk becoming the Gospel ; the Glory of Religion consisting not in the Number, but in the Purity of its Votaries : But to adorn Christianity, is to live up to
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its Rules, and observe its Commands ; they being all of them of that Nature, as to render those that observe them purely harmless and inoffensive ; so Divine and rational, so perfective of our Nature, so excellent and refin'd, and so every way adapted to the Quiet and Happiness of Mankind, as to reflect a particular Beauty and Lustre upon that Religion that enjoins them. And as the Laws of *Christianity* are thus pure and perfect, and every Grace has such a commanding Quality to force Men's Love and Esteem, a *Christian* acts below himself, and the Dignity of his Profession, when he pursues any other Method of living, than what the *Gospel* prescribes ; and then only is his *Conversation* truly *becoming the Gospel*, when he acts and demeans himself conformably to those Laws, and is exemplary in the Practice of all those Graces and Vertues, which are the Ornaments of the *Christian* Religion.

But here I must observe to you, that as we are oblig'd to the Practice of all the Graces of *Christianity* in general ; so the Apostles seem to single out, and recommend some particular Ones to us, as more eminently and peculiarly *becoming the Gospel* : As namely,

1. *Humility and Meekness* ; the entertaining a low and modest Opinion of our selves ; the curbing the natural heat and fierceness of our Temper, and not suffering it to break out into Rage and Passion ; and the behaving our selves civilly and respectfully towards all Men. So St. Paul, exhorting the *Ephesians* to *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they were called*, i. e. of the *Gospel* ; and directing them how they should do so, he tells

tells them, it must be *with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love*, Eph. 4. 2.

And indeed, such a modest and humble, such a mild and quiet Behaviour, does mightily insinuate into Men's Esteem, and even extort a Commendation from them ; it carries something so agreeable, so charming along with it, that they cannot but speak well of it ; and tends so naturally to the Good and Peace of Society, that they can't but have honourable Thoughts of that Religion that enjoins it : Whereas a haughty and arrogant Temper, a turbulent and unruly Spirit, an impatient and fiery Disposition, as they have a direct tendency to the breaking that good Correspondence there should be between Neighbours, to the promoting Quarrels and Disputes in the World, and to the disturbing the Quiet and Tranquility of Mankind ; so for a *Christian* to indulge or give a loose to them, is plainly to act unbecoming his Profession, and to disgrace that Religion he pretends to embrace.

2. *St. Paul* does further recommend *Peace and Unity* to us, as becoming Ornaments of *Christianity* ; directing us, if we would *walk worthy of our Vocation*, to keep the *Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 3. *To stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind*, Phil. 1. 22. *To let nothing be done through Strife and Vain-glory ; and to do all things without Murmurings and Disputings ;* and that for this very Purpose, *that we may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation,*

Nation, among whom we (Christians should) shine as Lights in the World: holding forth the Word of Life, or recommending the Gospel to others by such an exemplary Conversation. Phil. 2. 3. 14, 15. To follow after the things that make for Peace. Rom. 14. 19. And as much as lyeth in us to live peaceably with all Men, Rom. 12. 18.

Now what a noble Idea does it give us of *Christianity*, when we consider how its Precepts are thus adapted to promote Peace and Goodwill, and an entire Harmony and Agreement amongst Mankind? And were its Directions but more universally follow'd, how delightful would it be, to see a People at perfect Unity among themselves, and observe a Spirit of Peace and Love running through a Kingdom? How happy would it be for Mankind, did this *Gospel* Temper more prevail in the World, and put a stop to those Heats and Divisions, those Feuds and Animosities, those Quarrels and Contentions, that are so common amongst them? This would indeed be a kind of Emblem of *Heaven*, a Resemblance of that blissful State, which the blessed Angels and glorified Spirits are in Above, where an universal Harmony and Concord reigns, and constitutes a main part of their Felicity; And were this our Case in this World, it might with some Reason tempt us to take up *St. Peter's* Words to our *Saviour* at his Transfiguration, and say, *It is good for us to be here, and make us much more unwilling to leave the World, than we are.*

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But on the contrary, what a melancholy and disagreeable Prospect does it afford us, to observe the very Reverse of all this? To see a City, a Church, a Nation so miserably divided into Parties and Factions? To hear Men continually wrangling and disputing, railing at and reviling one another? How shameful and abominable is it, to find a Society of *Christians* running counter the very Principles of their Religion; using all the little Arts they can think of to support their several Parties; to keep up Divisions; and to widen those Wounds and Breaches, which, God knows, are but too ghastly and dangerous already? And what a Reflection is it upon the *Gospel*, to see those very Persons, who pretend to govern themselves by its Rules, acting manifestly against them; *biting and devouring one another*, and treating one another more like *Enemies*, than like *Brethren* or *Christians*? And this is still more criminal and disgraceful to our Holy Religion, when they who are the Ambassadors of the *Prince of Peace*, and oblig'd by their very Office to promote Peace and Unity among Mankind, shall so far forget their Character, as to become the Authors of Strife and Dissension, and make it their Business to inflame and divide.

3. The Apostle further presseth *Submission and Respect to Rulers and Magistrates*, as another necessary Means of *adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour*, Tit. 3. 1. and elsewhere. At the very dawning of *Christianity*, there rose up certain Seducers in the Church, Persons of loose and dissolute Principles; who being told of that
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Spiritual Freedom the *Gospel* did afford them from Sin, and the Observation of the Ceremonial Law, were presently for carrying the Matter further, and throwing off all Subjection even to Civil Government, as inconsistent with their *Christian Liberty*; and imagin'd themselves by their very embracing *Christianity*, to be immediately freed from all Ties and Obligations to Obedience to their Princes and Governors. And as this was a very great Reflection upon the *Christian Religion*, as tho' it countenanc'd Anarchy, and encourag'd such licentious Notions and Practices; so there is nothing more common with the Apostles, than to take Occasion in their Epistles, to condemn all such Principles, as directly contrary to the Laws of Christianity; and to press Reverence and Subjection to Magistrates, and all in Authority, as indispensibly required by them; and to speak of all Contempt of, and want of Duty and Respect to Rulers, as unlawful, and prohibited by the *Gospel*, and no ways allowable in any one who professeth himself a *Christian*: And indeed, to suppose otherwise, would be to entertain a very unbecoming Notion of the *Gospel*, and make it appear very abominable and odious in the Eyes of the World; and therefore St. Peter looks upon such *filthy Dreamers*, as St. Jude calls them, *who despise Dominion, and speak Evil of Dignities*, who contemn and trample upon Magistracy, who insult their Governors, and behave themselves rudely and disrespectfully to those that are in Authority, as a Scandal to their Profession, as giving occasion for *the way of Truth to be evil*

spoken of; and *Spots and Blemishes* in a Christian Society, 2 Pet. 2. 2, 10. But then,

4. Though we don't meet with any particular Precept or Direction to this Purpose, in the Writings of the Apostles; yet by the general Law of Christianity, whereby all that embrace it are requir'd to walk worthy of it, even Rulers and Magistrates themselves, are under an Obligation to promote the Honour and Reputation of Religion, and adorn the Doctrine of *Christ*; by diligently answering the End of their Office and Commission, and faithfully discharging the Trust reposed in them; by laying aside all little self-interested Views and Designs, and having a particular Regard to the publick Interest and Welfare; by promoting the Practice of Vertue and Religion, and taking all Legal Methods for the suppressing Vice and Prophaneness, as being set up and appointed by God, *for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and for the Praise of them that do well*; and in a Word, by distributing Justice fairly and impartially, without any regard to Interest or Party, or any other outward Consideration whatsoever: And that Governour who does thus faithfully and conscientiously discharge his Duty in all Respects, as he advances his own Honour thereby, so does he in a very eminent Degree keep up the Credit and Reputation of *Christianity* too, and *walk becoming the Gospel*.

These are some of those particular Duties which the Apostles recommend to our Practice, as more signally Ornamental to our Holy Religion; all which, tho' they are highly becoming

ing a *Christian*, yet does not the particular mention of them exclude, or excuse us from the Practice of all the rest; as tho' it were a thing indifferent, whether we would practise the others or no, or the Honour of our Religion were sufficiently secur'd without them: No; he that would walk worthy of the *Gospel*, must look upon himself oblig'd to the Exercise of all *Christian Graces* in general, and to be Holy and Exemplary, not only in some particular Instances, but *in all Conversation and Godliness*; and to endeavour by all Means, by universal Holiness and Obedience, that his Actions may be agreeable to the Precepts and Principles of *Christianity*; every Transgression of any part of the Evangelical Law, being a Breach of our Duty, and a Blot upon our Profession.

(3.) To let our *Conversation* be as it becometh the *Gospel*, does imply farther, the acting and behaving our selves as those, who profess to look for great and glorious Rewards in another World. The Blessings and Rewards of *Christianity* are transcendently Great and Excellent, surpassing all that we can conceive or imagine; but for the generality, they are future and unseen; and he that pretends to be a *Christian*, if he understand any thing at all of his Religion, doth profess his Hopes of such unspeakable Happiness hereafter, as the Reward of his Obedience here: And he that looks for such good Things to come, must certainly live and act after another manner, than he that has no expectation at all: He that does not believe a future State of Happiness, cannot be suppos'd to be at any pains
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to look after it, but will confine his Wishes and Desires, his Thoughts and Endeavours to the Enjoyments of this present Life: But *every one that hath this hope in him*, as St. John speaks, *purifieth himself, even as God is pure*, 1 Joh. 3. 3. and will endeavour by all requisite Means, to fit and qualify himself for that State of Blessedness he hopes for.

A *Christian's* Life and Conversation ought to be answerable to his Hopes; it is not for him to live as others do, who hath such great Encouragement to live otherwise: This Hope should quicken him to his Duty, and to a diligent Endeavour to obtain the Blessings he has in view; it should set him upon the Practice of all Grace and Vertue, and make him careful to serve and please God, the Author and Fountain of all our Happiness; it should support him under Trouble, and make him patient under Affliction; it should teach him not to be terrified or uneasie at the Thoughts of his Dissolution, and take away all his Fears of Death; it should arm him against Temptations, and secure him against all Allurements to Evil; it should animate him to Constancy and Perseverance in the Faith, and dispose him not to think much of any Sufferings he may undergo for the Sake of the *Gospel*, which shall in the End receive such a *glorious recompence of Reward*; in a Word, it should raise his Thoughts from Earth to Heaven, and incline him *to fix his Heart there, where he professeth his Treasure and his Happiness to be*: It does not at all become him to let his Affections be groveling upon the Earth; it is below a *Christian*, who

who has such glorious Things in view, who has such a Prospect of Divine and Spiritual Pleasure before him, to be hunting after Carnal Joys, or pursuing only a little brutal Satisfaction.

It is a very reasonable Direction of the Apostle, Col. 3. 1. *That if we be risen with Christ, and by Baptism incorporated into his Church, and made Partakers of a Christian Hope; we should seek those Things that are Above, and set our Affections on Things Above, and not on Things on the Earth:* We should live up to our Expectations of future Joy and Happiness, and have noble and aspiring Thoughts, proportionable to the Object of our Hope: He that is not thus influenc'd, by those Hopes *Christianity* gives him of a State of endless Happiness in the next Life, does disgrace his Profession, and seem to believe nothing at all of that Glory and Felicity, which the Gospel propounds to us, or not to think them worth his looking after. And therefore the Apostle in that foremention'd, Phil. 3. 18, 19. looks upon them as *Enemies to Christianity, whose God is their Belly, who mind Earthly Things;* who only seek a little temporal Ease and Pleasure, but are not at all solicitous about Celestial Happiness.

A *Christian's* Conversation ought to be in Heaven; his Heart, his Soul, his Affections, his Desires, his Endeavours, his Aims and Designs, should all be tending thither; there is the Happiness he looks for, and thither should his Thoughts and Wishes be continually ascending: And when by the assured Hope and Expectation of the glorious Rewards of *Christianity*, a Man's
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Soul 'once tun'd up to that Pitch, that he can readily endure any thing for the Sake of *Christ* and his *Gospel*; can disintangle his Affections from the World, and despise all the Trash and Vanities of this Earth; then does he behave himself like a *Christian*; then *is his Conversation truly becoming the Gospel*. But I hasten to the next thing I propos'd, which was,

II. To offer some Motives to your Consideration, to enforce the Duty upon you; and for this Purpose, I shall only desire you to consider, the great Mischief and Danger of neglecting it; as it is,

1. A Manifest Abuse of the Goodness of *God* to us, in calling us to the Knowledge of his *Gospel*, and making us Partakers of the Privileges of it; and a defeating his gracious Purposes and Designs therein.

2. A very high Affront to our Blessed *Saviour*, and a Scandal and Reproach upon his Religion.

3. Almost certain Means of depriving ourselves of all the happy Privileges and Advantages of *Christianity*, and of exposing our selves to inevitable Misery and Ruin in the other World. And,

4. As it may be an occasion of drawing down the Divine Judgments upon the City or Nation to which we belong.

(1.) Not to have our *Conversation becoming the Gospel*, is to abuse the Mercy and Goodness of *Almighty God*, and to defeat his gracious Purposes

poses and Designs, in calling us to the Knowledge of it. The All-wise God in all his Actions and Dispensations towards us, has still a regard to our Happiness, as well as to his own Glory; This was the End for which he created us at first; and this also was his kind Intention, in *calling us out of Darkness into his marvellous Light, and translating us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* Sad and miserable indeed was our Condition in the Days of our heathenish Blindness and Ignorance; when, as the Apostle describes it, *Eph. 2. 12. we were without Christ*, were ignorant of him, and without any Interest in the Merits of his Sufferings; Were *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel*, or had no Communion with, or Relation to the Church of God; And consequently were *Strangers from the Covenants of Promise*, or without any Title to the Privileges and Blessings of the Evangelical Covenant, and having no manner of claim to the Promise of Redemption by Christ; *Having no Hope, i. e.* no solid Ground to build our Hopes of Pardon and Salvation upon; and *without God, i. e.* without the Knowledge or Worship of the true God in the World. This is the unhappy State of the Pagan World at this Day; and this was once our own deplorable Case, until God, *who is rich in Mercy, and abundant in Compassion, for his great Love wherewith he loved us*, was pleased, by revealing the Gospel of his Son to us, and disposing us by his Spirit to receive and embrace it, to deliver us out of it. So that now our Condition is exceedingly alter'd for the better; and we *who sometimes were far off*, were at a distance
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from God, and out of the Road of Salvation, *are now made nigh in Christ Jesus*, or by Virtue of our Union with *Christ*, and Faith in him, are entitled to all the Benefits and Privileges of the *Christian Church*, as well as any other of its Members. And wherefore was this Grace and Favour shewn us? Was it that we should live as we please, according to our own Schemes and Notions? Was it that we should the more freely indulge our Lusts, and gratifie our corrupt Inclinations? Was it that we should take a greater liberty to Sin, and live the same sensual ungodly Lives we did before? No certainly; it was that we should *no longer live to our selves, but unto God, i. e.* to his Service, and according to those Rules and Methods of living that he has prescrib'd us; and that we should *shew forth the Praises of him*, who hath called us into this glorious and excellent State: That we should be exemplary in the Practice of all *Christian Graces*, and behave our selves in so becoming a manner, *that Men seeing our good Works, and beholding our blameless Conversation in Christ, might glorifie our Father which is in Heaven*: And to act otherwise; to live either below, or contrary to the Purity and Simplicity of the *Gospel*, is plainly to frustrate the Divine Intentions in this Matter, and cast a manifest Contempt upon God's Goodness: When he has been pleas'd to do so much for us, to oblige us by so signal a Benefit; the least that we can do, is to devote our selves to his Service, and endeavour to answer his Expectations from us, by living up to the Dignity of our Profession, and agreeably to the
Precepts

Precepts of our Holy Religion: And when we refuse to do this, when so great an Instance of Kindness shall not have force enough to engage us to so reasonable a Duty, we act not only contrary to the *Rules of Christianity*, but to the common Principles of Gratitude and Humanity too.

(2.) To live otherwise than *as it becometh the Gospel*, is a very high Affront to our Blessed Saviour, and a very sensible Reproach and Reflection upon his Religion. When He came down from Heaven on purpose to rescue us out of the unhappy Condition we were in, and declare the glad Tydings of Salvation to us; to reveal to us all necessary Truths, and give us a clearer view of our Duty than ever we had before; to *redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie us to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*; to exalt us to the high Honour of being the adopted Sons of God, and Co-heirs with himself to all the Glory and Happiness of Heaven: If after all this, and our pretending to embrace his Doctrine, and own him for our Lord, by a sinful and scandalous Behaviour we disgrace our Profession; and walk *unworthy of our Vocation*, We do in effect declare to the World, that our Profession is all a Cheat, and that we don't believe those very Truths we would seem to embrace; we make our Blessed Lord himself little less than a Lyar or Impostor, one not worthy to be credited or regarded by us; and all our pretended Submission to him, and *calling him Lord, Lord*, is but like that Sarcastical Behaviour

haviour of the Soldiers towards him at his Arraignment, when in Derision *they bowed the Knee before him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews,* Matt. 27. 29. or like that traiterous act of Judas, who saluted him with the formal Title of *Master*, at the same time that he basely betray'd him to his Enemies, Matt. 26. 49. A greater Mockery and Affront we cannot possibly put upon him, than to profess our selves his Disciples and Followers, and not mind a Word he says; or call our selves his Subjects, without taking care to do any of those things which he commands us: And what he himself thinks of such formal Professors of him, we may learn from his own Words, Matt. 7. 23. That *he never knew them, i. e.* That he will not look upon, or own them for his Disciples: And what shall be the end of such Men, he has told us also, Matt. 24. 51. *viz.* That *he will cut them asunder, and appoint them their Portion with the Hypocrites; where there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.*

But then as by not living answerably to our *Christian* Calling, we do thus mock and affront our *Blessed Lord*; so do we bring a Blemish and Reproach upon *Christianity* too; exposing it to the Scorn and Insults of its Enemies, and giving them too great occasion to think meanly and contemptibly of it. We cannot take a more effectual Method to ruin the Credit and Interest of the *Gospel*, than by walking unsuitably to it: Men commonly judge of a Religion by the outward Practice and Behaviour of those who profess it; and notwithstanding the Purity and Strictness of those Rules we pretend to be govern'd by, if our
Lives

Lives be not agreeable to them, they will be ready to reflect upon *Christianity*, as indulging us in those Liberties we take, and take occasion from every unbecoming Action we are guilty of, to ridicule and run it down. So that if we have any Concern for our Holy Religion, any Regard to its Honour and Reputation, it should engage us to behave our selves in so harmless and inoffensive a manner, that its Enemies *may have no evil thing to say of us*, nor the Name of *Christ* be blasphem'd thro' our Means; and to endeavour to have our *Conversation so becoming the Gospel*, as that we may *stop the Mouths of Gain-sayers*, and even force them to think and speak honourably of it.

(3.) *A Conversation unbecoming the Gospel*, is the most certain and effectual Means to deprive us of all the Benefits and Privileges of *Christianity*, and to expose us to Eternal Misery and Ruin.

For the Privileges and Blessings of the Gospel are not common to all that are with in the Pale of the visible Church, and profess themselves Members of it; but are appropriated only to those, who by Faith and Holiness do qualify themselves for them: As for *Nominal Christians*, such as are *Christians* in Name and Profession only, they have no Lot or Portion in these Matters: They partake indeed of some external Privileges, such as the Sacraments, the Preaching of the Word, and other outward Ordinances of Religion: But as for inward and Spiritual Blessings, the Graces and Consolations of the *Holy Spirit*, the Adoption, or the Honour of
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being the Sons of God, the Promises, &c. they are not at all entitled to them: To think that our bare Admission into the Church of *Christ*, or making a formal Profession of the Gospel, is sufficient to give us a Right to these Benefits, is sadly to impose upon our selves: For in Truth he is not a *Christian* who is one outwardly only, in shew and appearance; and it is a very great Absurdity and Presumption for him who is no *Christian*, to pretend any Claim to a *Christian's* Reward.

And as by an unbecoming *Conversation*, we do thus forfeit our Title to the Happy Privileges and Advantages of *Christianity*; so do we expose our selves also to Eternal Misery and Torment in the next Life. *For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven*, says the Apostle, (*viz.* in those severe Threatnings he has denounc'd) *against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*; even against them who sin against Natural Light only, and much more against those who enjoy the Glorious Light, and make a Profession of the Gospel, but don't walk answerably to it: And better would it have been for such, if they had never heard of *Christ*, or been made acquainted with the Truths and Precepts of *Christianity*, than after they have known and embrac'd them, not to regulate their Lives accordingly; their Abuse of God's Mercy, their Hypocrisie and Disimulation, *their trampling under Foot the precious Blood of the Son of God*, and exposing him and his Religion to open Shame by their unchristian Practices, and that clear Light and Knowledge

ledge they sin against, serving to render their Punishment the more sharp and severe, as well as the more sure and certain. I shall but just add further,

(4.) That the mischievous Effects of not ordering our *Conversation* aright, and *as it becometh the Gospel*, are yet of a more publick and extensive Nature than this, and don't only affect our selves in particular, but in a great measure the City, or Nation also to which we belong, by drawing down the Divine Judgments upon them, and helping forward their Destruction. For publick Bodies and Societies are only punishable in this World; and when a People have once fill'd up the measure of their Iniquities, God will sooner or later arise and take Vengeance on them, and display his Justice, in inflicting some exemplary Punishment upon them for their Wickedness: And we do so far contribute to those Miseries and Calamities, God may see fit at any time to bring upon our Country, and hasten its Ruin, as by disgracing our Profession, and acting contrary to the Rules of *Christianity*, we add to the measure of its Sins, and ripen it for Judgment.

Thus have I endeavour'd to shew you what it is to *have your Conversation as it becometh the Gospel of Christ*, and the great Reason and Necessity of putting the Precept in Practice; and nothing further remains for me to do, but to desire you in a Word, from what has been said, to be perswaded to live as *Christians* should do, and to walk becoming your Profession; to conform yourselves to the Principles of your Holy Religion,
and

and both to believe and act as the Gospel directs you; and to labour to be more and more establish'd in the Faith of *Christ*, and to abound in all *Christian* Graces and Vertues; that so you may live up to the Dignity of your Character, and no ways disgrace that Sacred Name by which you are call'd; and that by such an *Evangelical Conversation*, you may recommend your selves to the Divine Favour and Mercy, and prevent those Eternal Torments, which a contrary Life and Practice would expose you to; and by taking this most effectual Method to avert God's Judgments from, and to draw down the Blessings of Heaven upon this City and Nation, you may at once shew your selves good Subjects, and good Citizens, as well as good Christians.

And may our Land for ever remain the Object of the Divine Care and Protection, and we always enjoy our present happy Constitution both in Church and State: May the Blessing of God rest upon this great City in particular, and continue it always Great and Flourishing: May its Magistrates from time to time be *Men fearing God, and hating Covetousness*, constantly inspir'd with a hearty Concern for its Happiness, and zealous to promote its Welfare to the utmost of their Power: May its Inhabitants lay aside all their unhappy Feuds and Animosities, and mind and regard its true Interest: May Faction and Dissension from henceforth cease in it, and Vertue and Religion, Peace and Plenty, for ever flourish and abound therein: And may the latest Generations of the World find it, what it has hitherto been, *A Name and a Praise among all People of the Earth.* 7 DE 65

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